

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, October 16, 2006**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschmeier, Janet Tate, Ralph Bedel, John Duncan, Jim Conrady and Larry Bush.

Council Members Absent: None.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Fr. Bill Wagner at 7:03 PM EDT with a prayer.

Fr. Bill and Vic Ivers introduced Larry Bush as the newest member of Parish Council. Larry has been a member of the parish since 1987 when the family moved to this area from Columbus.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The last council meeting was held on Monday, September 18th. Vic Ivers asked if there was any feedback regarding the minute's draft that was previously distributed. Mike Gennett stated there was no feedback.

Fr. Bill made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Vic Ivers second the motion. The vote was 8 to 0 to accept the minutes.

Mike Gennett mentioned that at the last meeting Fr. Bill made a proposal that if there are no objections to the draft minutes within two weeks of release to council members that attended the meeting; they would be automatically approved and posted on the parish web site.

A discussion took place on how the best way was to manage the process. It was proposed that Mike Gennett make it very clear what needs to transpire on the draft email that contains the proposed minutes. That is, any single member who has an objection to the draft minutes and wants to

propose a change (typos are excluded) will automatically have the concern brought to the next meeting for a discussion. The council member would send an email to Mike Gennett with their proposed change. The minutes would therefore not be distributed. This must be accomplished within the next two weeks after the draft was released. Members who do not respond within the two week period will be considered to have automatically approved the minutes.

Kathy Hornschemeier made a motion to accept this proposal. Ralph Bedel seconded it. The vote was 8 to 0 to accept this change regarding the council minutes.

Jim Conrady made a proposal that Council start to meet during the summer months. There was little comment regarding the suggestion. Some suggested it might be ok as long as council members were not on vacation.

Business Manager Report: Mike Gennett gave the report.

Finances – As of October 16th, our finances are running better than last fiscal year by \$53,595.69. Most of the improvement is coming from income rather than expense reductions. This is a very positive change! The Sunday collections through October 15 are up \$11,295.37 over last year and school tuition is up \$31,199.54. Expenses are running fairly even.

The most positive aspect is the school's marketing effort has clearly paid off. We added students in August above what was budgeted. This income goes straight to the bottom line. When you fill empty seats in a classroom, it positively affects our operating results. This is going to help us get through this year with the unexpected increase in the Archdiocese assessment.

Fr. Bill stated we were faced in early August with layoffs and other expense reductions until the additional registrations happened.

Festival – The Festival profit is probably going to drop \$10,000 to \$12,000 from the previous year. Every piece did well except for the Grand Raffle.

The Grand Raffle tickets raised \$13,680 and the prizes totaled \$19,240. This loss does not even include postage or printing costs. Clearly, the parishioners did not support the Grand Raffle this year. The Festival team went overboard to get the tickets out long before school was out, made numerous announcements, and then finally mailed the ones not picked up. Furthermore, Beechmont Ford has never paid us the \$3,000 promotional allowance. They have paid all the other parishes but us. This has now developed into a major concern.

Fr. Bill stated he has suggested to the Festival Chairs that the car be dropped in the future and replaced with a \$10,000 cash prize.

Bingo – Bingo continues to improve each week. Bingo should have a profit of \$7,000 by October 31, the end of the state gambling year. All this profit has been earned since the end of August. Bingo borrowed \$17,541 from the parish and it has all been paid back. Gross profit excluding the loan from the parish will exceed \$24,000. Mike said he believes that all the Bingo effort will really begin to pay off this year. A big appreciation is due to this dedicated group.

Kathy Hornschemeier asked if the Bingo profits are being exclusively used to pay on the parish debt. Mike stated this was not the case. Bingo would be contributing to total parish income which in turn would be used for all our expenditures including the debt.

Long Term issues – Mike stated we continue to have the following financial issues we will need to address in the years to come:

- Soaring Health Care costs
- Utilities
- Competitive Salaries
- Keeping school tuition affordable
- Flat or marginal increases in the Sunday collection
- A 52% increase in the assessment due the diocese between now and 2010.
- Parish debt and interest payments will grow each year. The debt and interest is scheduled to be retired in 14 years. Currently, our payments are \$100,000 a year. The annual payments will begin to incrementally increase each year to

as high as \$175,000. It will be important to continue to pay this as scheduled so we will have the flexibility to expand some day. We can't borrow when we have this much debt. Fr. Bill stated we have made all our monthly payments on time this year. Those payments are currently \$8,333 per month.

All of these major financial issues will continue to impact all our decisions in the future. We don't want to get into trouble.

Jim Conrady asked how good were the records on the Vision 2000 fund drive? He said it might be worth looking at who did not honor their pledges and send them a letter.

Mike said he was not here when the fund drive took place and has no feeling on how accurate the records are. The campaign took place from 1995 thru 1999. He stated a year or two ago someone came to see him wondering why they never got a contribution credit for a \$2,500 contribution to the gym floor. There was no record of the donation in our system. The donor said the check was handed over to the Boosters in 1998. Mike said he asked for a copy of the canceled check and the parishioner just did not want to open up this issue. The bottom line is this fund drive was a long time ago what really happened is really unknown. We just didn't have the technology in place as we have now to capture this sort of information.

Jim Conrady stated he understood the Boosters kept their own records outside of the parish at that time. Mike said that was true. The account was not at 5th/3rd Bank and Fr. John Fischer did not have signature on the account. We exerted pressure about 6 years ago to get the account moved with the Pastor as primary signatory on the account.

Fr. Bill stated we no longer have any of these issues today. Mike stated that every single organization bank account requires two signatures...one is the organization treasurer and the other must be the Pastor or the Business Manager. All the bank accounts are on line for daily monitoring and all bank correspondence goes through the Business Manager's office. We now have complete records on file for all our bank accounts.

Energy – With winter approaching, Mike presented the following proposal for conserving energy this winter (which is the same as last year except in the church):

ENERGY PLAN – WINTER 2006-7

Begins November 20, 2006

Temperatures – same as 2005-6

Heider Hall & Choir Loft windows – same as 2005-6 to have plastic put over the same windows as a year ago

Church – temperatures would not be lowered until January 9 (too many events scheduled weekday evenings, Christmas poinsettias need heat to survive, etc.)

More Martyr Hall – Program thermostat to have heat at 50 degrees other than Mon-Thurs 3 PM – 9 PM when the building is in use. Consistent temperature at 50 during Thanksgiving, Christmas & Easter breaks

Gym – 64 degrees – (same as last year)

Parish Office – 66 during the day. Lower to 60 at night – last person out. (Same as last year)

School extended holidays –

Thanksgiving – November 21 @ 3 PM until November 27 @ 6 AM

- Heider Hall down to 50 degrees, Main building undercroft down to 55 degrees
- Modular classrooms power is shut off

Christmas – December 20 @ 3 PM until January 2 @ 6 AM

- Heider Hall down to 50 degrees, Main building undercroft down to 55 degrees
- Modular classrooms power is shut off
- Parish Hall heated for Dec 21 & 28 bingo, private party Dec 22

Easter – April 5 @ 3 PM- April 16 @ 6 AM

- Heider Hall down to 50 degrees, Main building undercroft down to 55 degrees
- Modular classrooms power is shut off

- Parish Hall heated for Apr 12 Bingo (no Bingo APR 5).
LIBRARY HEATED FOR APR 5 ADORATION

No changes MLK & Presidents Day weekends unless PSR canceled.

NO PERSONAL SPACE HEATERS - EITHER GAS OR ELECTRIC!
No lights are to be on when a room or building is NOT in use.

Even though natural gas costs are a fraction of what they were a year ago, we must not spend money on energy when the buildings are not in use. We are suggesting not raising and lowering the temperature in the church until after Christmas. There are just too many events scheduled at night in December and it takes a day to lower and another to raise back the temperature. Plus the poinsettias need heat to survive.

Kathy Hornschemeier asked why Martin Luther King weekend could not be a time we saved on energy by also shutting down? Mike stated that is the weekend the Boosters are having their winter gambling event in a number of buildings and PSR is in session that Sunday. We need to provide heat for both events.

John Duncan made a proposal that an automatic renewal of the energy plan be made from year to year. Vic Ivers second the motion. The vote was 8 to 0 to accept the energy plan as an automatic renewal each year.

Pastor's report - Fr. Bill gave his update.

Church Light Study - Fr. Bill opened by giving a copy of the electrical study on the church to John Duncan and Larry Bush who were not at the last meeting.

Fr. Bill then asked for approval for Proposal #6 in the study. Proposal #6 was adding the surge protectors as noted in the plan. We have added a lot of technological equipment including the new phone system since the expansion was completed in 1999. Our equipment needs to be protected. Fr. Bill further pointed out that there have been power surges and lightning strikes we have had to deal with. This covers everything except More Martyr Hall and the Rectory. The low bid was approximately \$9,500.

Jim Conrady passed out his list of recommended electricians he had promised at the last meeting. Mike Gennett stated when he saw Santel Electric on the list that they had had the study since the end of July. They were too busy to handle it at that time and never got back to us. In fact, other contractors turned us down either because the project was beyond their capability or the height of the church concerned them. We have received two bids for Proposal #6.

Jim Conrady made a proposal to go ahead with Proposal #6. Vic Ivers second the motion. The vote was 8 to 0 to proceed.

Fr. Bill then said he wanted Council to consider Proposal #1 at the next meeting. Proposal #1 is adding flood lights on the next beam back from the altar. This will help to lighten the area in front of the Sanctuary for funerals and other events. He will ask for approval to proceed in November.

Pastoral Regions – Fr. Bill stated that the Archbishop has been asked which region will be going first. Is there a master plan? The Archbishop has stated there is no master plan. He does not know what will happen first. There is no pecking order. What will happen will happen based upon retirements, deaths, etc.

Deanery – There is really nothing new to report.

There are two clusters in the Deanery that are issues:

Hillsboro & Greenfield – The Pastor of Greenfield is also a doctor and is on loan from the Cleveland diocese. He is so busy being a doctor and a pastor there is concern he may not be able to take on a second parish. Also, there are local issues dating back over 100 years between these two communities that go far beyond combining the two parishes.

Amelia-New Richmond-Bethel – One priest to serve these 3 parishes will not work based upon the current church sizes. Bethel is building a new church, Amelia has not been able to build a new church, and there is no problem at New Richmond. St. Bernadette School may be down to 122 kids and that is not good. Their budget is unknown. The only way combining these three parishes will work is if there is one Sunday Mass at

each location. Right now, that is not possible at St. Bernadette without a new, larger church.

McNicholas High School – Subcommittees are now in place. An alumni program is going to be developed. There will be more interactions with the parishes including Booster Clubs. Next year, there will be no more high school boundary lines. Recruiting will be open. Look for aggressive recruiting in the Milford-Goshen area from Moeller. McNick's enrollment is at 807 which are down 4 from last year, but above their budget of 800. This is a good sign.

RCIA – possible 7 candidates at this time. Too early to tell for sure.

Pastor's 24 hour policy – The diocese has had a long standing policy of a Pastor taking 24 hours off from their duties. Fr. Bill stated he has never taken it. Next year, we will have four Deacons if the two that are currently studying are ordained. If that happens, Fr. Bill is planning to begin to take his 24 hours off. It would begin after the last Mass on Sunday and run until early Monday evening. The Monday morning Mass would become a Communion Service conducted by one of the Deacons. This is a common practice now in most parishes. However, no final decision has been made.

School – Fr. Bill stated we are at 319 kids, an increase of almost 20 kids. A nearby Christian academy closed last year. They were going to move, but never reopened. We received some of their computer and smart boards which were originally from the state.

Jim Conrady asked if there was a mailing list we could get from them for marketing purposes. Fr. Bill stated they were fundamentalist in practice. He was recently asked to sign an approval form for a parish family to attend there....that they were in good standing here. He refused to sign the form. The school stated they are non-denominational Christianity. And what exactly is that? Would this letter be used to in a way that would not reflect positively on our faith?

New Secretary – Donna Buchheit is the new parish secretary and seems to be doing well. Leslie Molitor will continue to be part of CRHP and a Wedding Coordinator.

New Business - Janet Tate said she had some issues she wanted to raise.

Janet's husband is an usher and reports **the Sunday collections** are chaotic when there is a second collection. We no longer announce that the round basket and the square basket are for specific collections (first or second). This causes lots of confusion and the ushers are unable to effectively sort the two collections. Some parishioners hold onto the first basket and wait for the second basket so they only have to pass them on only one time. Mike Gennett stated at St. Veronica they use big numbers on the basket when there are two collections. Looks like a house number. A "1" and a "2" are attached to the side of the baskets. Fr. Bill said he had no idea this was going on and wants it fixed as soon as possible (*this concern has been passed on to Michael Thomas for a resolution.*)

Janet also said that **Scrip Sales are a problem**. If some one shows up to sell them, they must only stay around 5 minutes. She can't find anyone at 5:05 on Saturday. No one showed up this past Saturday despite the bulletin saying they would be there. Mike Gennett stated he also has had recent complaints regarding scrip "no shows". Larry Bush said he was the problem this past Saturday. He was scheduled to be here to sell scrips but went to Kings Island instead. The coordinator of the program in all fairness to her did not know this. Kathy Hornschemeier also asked why there was no pre-ordering program under way for Christmas.

Fr. Bill stated that selling scrips is hard to do here with three exits from the church. Most people do not exit out of the front doors.

(Scrip Coordinator Theresa Willenbrink stopped in the morning after the meeting and was filled in on what was said at Parish Council. Theresa did not know about the problem on Saturday. She also pointed out that the Sunday before PTO only sold \$25 worth of scrips after three Masses. The parishioners in general are not responding. She suggested a pulpit announcement and was referred to Michael Thomas. She said a pre-order form is on the school web site. I suggested she get the forms to me and I would also put them on the parish web site. School families are not the only potential customers. Also, there is an issue of how to handle seniors who do not have a computer or are computer literate.)

Larry Bush stated that the **Knights of Columbus** Msgr Gerdes Council would like to donate translucent UV film to put over the windows in the west school classrooms under the church. The rooms are always hot.

Maintenance can do the work or the Knights can come in as volunteers to do it. When it was discussed about contacting the school, Fr. Bill stated the school is owned by the parish and not the Education Commission. He further stated that Parish Council does not need to ask their permission to accept this donation. Kathy Hornschmeier then made the motion to accept the donation. Vic Ivers second it. The vote was 8 to 0 to put the film on these windows. Mike Gennett said he would be in touch with Larry to get the work completed.

Fr. Bill stated the school is starting to pressure to replace the windows in Heider Hall. A discussion began about the cost. Mike Gennett stated when we had the engineering consulting firm in a few years ago they had stated it would take "a few \$100,000's to update the building." Jim Conrady stated maybe the windows could be studded out and replaced with glass blocks. Just a thought. *(After an extensive engineering study in November 2004, long term structural repairs to Heider Hall were estimated to be \$151,500. The biggest expense would be the roof. Only a portion of the roof was replaced in 1999. The study did not address the windows. The parish made all the recommended short term structural repairs to this building at that time.)*

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:24 PM. Kathy Hornschmeier made the motion and Janet Tate seconded it. Fr. Bill gave a brief prayer.

NEXT MEETING - MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH - 8 PM